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# CHINA

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TO HEAR THE GOSPEL



## AREA AND POPULATION

Over four hundred million people — some authorities say as high as four hundred seventy-five million—live in China, with its outlying provinces of Mongolia, Sinkiang, and Tibet, an area of over four million square miles.

The first, five-barred, flag of China's republic represented five distinct classes of people within her borders, and though that flag has been superseded by another, the Chinese still refer to themselves as "The Five Peoples": (1) Han, the Chinese proper, the "sons of the Han dynasty;" (2) Man, the Manchu, former ruling class, overthrown in the rebellion of 1911; (3) Mung, the Mongolians; (4) Hwey, the Mohammedans, who are a distinct racial group as well as a separate religious factor; (5) Ti, the Tibetans. Not included in these five groups are some ten millions of aboriginal tribesmen, former residents of China's fertile valleys, now pushed back into the barren hills of southwest China.

## GOVERNMENT

China is governed by an Executive Yuan, or Cabinet, of which Generalissimo Chiang Kai-shek is chairman, as well as now being the President of the Republic of China. There has never yet been a general election in China, in which the people vote for their representatives in government, so we must understand that China's government is not an exact parallel with that, for instance, of the United States. Chiang came into power in 1929, and under his leadership China has been unified as never before in her long, continuous history. The present government of China is friendly towards the foreign missionary.

## RELIGIONS

The Chinese say that they have three religions, and that these are one. Certainly Buddhism, Taoism, and Confucianism have been grafted upon the stock of hoary tradition

concerning an over-ruling providence, a spirit-world, and a life after death.

Buddhism was introduced to China in A.D. 61, when Ming Ti, the Chinese Emperor, as the result of a dream, sent emissaries to the west to inquire for the true religion. Buddhist missionaries from India were not slow to enter the open door, and from that time Buddhism has grown and has spread its roots in China. Whatever the original classics of Buddhism may teach, that religion as seen in China today manifests itself in physical and moral filth, bound up with superstition and idolatry. Taoism is the "Doctrine of the Way" as taught by Lao-tze, who was born in 604 B.C. As practised by his followers it is a system of magic, witchcraft, and black art. It is but a travesty on the Way of Life revealed in the Word of God, and is definitely inimical to the Person and work of the Lord Jesus Christ, who truly acclaimed Himself as the Way, the Truth, and the Life.

Confucianism is primarily a code of ethics which has veered to spiritism in its devotion to the dead. Deceased ancestors are regarded as still existent and as exercising their influence in the affairs of the family.

These three systems, however, do not cover the whole religious life of China, for there are other forms of worship to be found all over the land. Mohammedanism, with all its bigotry and hardness, claims some ten million followers. Animism, demon worship, and many forms of pantheism are practised by many Chinese and by practically all of the aboriginal tribes people.

## METHODS OF EVANGELISM

Open-air preaching in markets, tent evangelism with follow-up work, widespread tract distribution, and house-to-house visitation are all effective methods, widely used to reach the Chinese with the Message of Life. Illiteracy, placed at seventy-five per cent for men and

ninety per cent for women, though something of a handicap, is gradually being overcome in the establishment of Government schools throughout the land. Bible conferences, short-term Bible schools, and special classes for inquirers, have been remarkably used of God for the strengthening of scattered believers and in the bringing of awakened souls to the knowledge of Salvation.

## THE CHINESE CHURCH

Chinese Christians have taken hold of the responsibilities and in many places are able to carry on their church work without the direction or oversight of foreign missionaries, though there is still a great need for foreign missionaries who will co-operate with the Chinese Church in evangelism and Bible teaching. This indigenous church movement has proved its value particularly in areas where foreign missionaries were forced to withdraw before the Japanese invasion.

## THE MISSIONARY BODY

Protestant missionaries in Free China toward the close of 1943 were numbered at only 1,700. Many of these will need to come home for furlough as soon as travel conditions permit and, while their places may be taken largely by returning workers now detained in the homelands by the war, there will be an insistent demand for new workers with the right qualifications. Even when the missionary body in China was between six thousand and seven thousand workers, there was an urgent need for increase in their numbers. Now is the time to pray, plan, and prepare for the opportunity which tomorrow will bring, please God.

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